

Jennifer Phostole
Principal



EAST RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
National Blue Ribbon School 2009

Assistant Principal:
Thomas P. Grace

10 East Ridge Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877
Telephone: 203-894-5500
Fax: 203-431-2851

Testimony of Amy Jonsson
Senior Counselor, East Ridge Middle School, Ridgefield, CT
in opposition of
S.B. 1095 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS
Education Committee - March 1, 2023

Representative Currey, Senator McCrory, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, Vice Chair Leeper, Vice Chair Winfield and esteemed members of the Education Committee, my name is Amy Jonsson and I am a School Counselor in Ridgefield and Regional VP (Fairfield County) for CT School Counselor Association. Thank you for the opportunity to offer **testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 1095 - AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS.**

Senate Bill 1095 adds that (ii) that individuals who are school counselors, social workers, psychologists, aides or other staff members and have appropriate training and ongoing supports may be assigned the duties of a school resource officer. I am very concerned about the potential implications of this bill as it is currently written. School counselors are trained to offer support and education to students in the areas of mental health, academics, career, social and emotional development. The CT State Department of Education recently adopted a new framework for school counselors to implement, and this bill as written is in direct conflict of the goals of a school counselor. This would be a direct conflict of interest for school counselors.

As I value the collaboration with our School Resource Officer, in no way am I qualified to do his job, and in no way is he qualified to do mine. I feel that there needs to be more clarification around the language of "assigned the duties of a school resource officer". As much as we collaborate to support our student body, our roles are quite different surrounding discipline and I would not want there to be any question or doubt for students as to what my role as school counselor entails. If students see my role as anything other than supportive, that would be in direct conflict of the definition of a school counselor as defined by the American School Counselor Association and CT School Counselor Association.

These last 3 years have been the most challenging years of my career. The mental health crisis that our students are experiencing is real, and the implications for us as school counselors are intense and extensive. We are stretched thin responding to mental health issues that are severe and urgent in nature. Adding more responsibilities to our complicated jobs is not appropriate and would not allow us to meet the needs of our students.

I would ask that you modify this bill. School Counselors should not be doing the work of the School Resource Officer as it is in direct conflict with the work and role of the School Counselor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy Jonsson, Senior Counselor
East Ridge Middle School
203-894-5500